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9 Sept 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Overflight Pilot Selection Panel

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation for your approval. Such recommendation is contained in paragraph 7.

2. By way of background, following the Russians' capture of Mr. Francis G. Powers in 1960, certain questions were raised concerning the methods by which operational pilots were selected for overflight programs. As a consequence, in December 1960, the Office of Special Activities promulgated Operations Policy Letter Number 12, entitled "Risk of Capture Briefing of Pilots Engaged in Overflight of the Communist Bloc", a copy of which is forwarded as Attachment A.

3. The intent of OPL-12 was to bring to bear the full capacity of appropriate Agency components in the assessments of pilots who could be subjected to hostile interrogation and whose disclosures could result in embarrassment to the United States. OPL-12 addressed itself specifically to assessing an individual's ability and inclination to effectively resist capture and interrogation. The Agency components selected for participation were Office of Security, Medical Staff, Counter Intelligence Staff, Technical Services Division, and Office of Special Activities. On the initiative of OSA, representatives from these components were first assembled as a panel in June 1962 to consider a group of pilot candidates.

4. It would be appropriate to review at this point the processing undergone by OXCART pilot candidates before their

Group 1  
Excluded from  
Automatic  
Downgrading and  
Declassification

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cases are formally presented to the panel made up of representatives of the aforementioned Offices. The first step is to seek from the nominee's military service the relevant personnel, security, and medical records. These files are reviewed by OSA and the individuals are rated on the basis of the file content. Experience in the OXCART program reflects a 50 per cent rejection rate of proposed nominees as a result of this initial file review. If the nominee passes the initial file review, additional processing is pursued. This processing, carried on under the cover of an Air Force sponsored research project, has consisted of the following: a complete background investigation by the USAF or other parent organization, with supplemental investigation by the Agency; a thorough physical examination at the Lovelace Clinic in Albuquerque or the Air Force School of Aviation Medicine and an intensive psychological assessment by Agency personnel. This latter includes estimates by the psychologists of the individual's trainability in resistance to hostile interrogation and also the individual's anticipated reaction to the forthcoming employment proposal. Psychiatric assessments are accomplished during the medical examination.

5. When the processing is completed and if the Agency Offices involved in the selection have not taken exception, the nominee is invited to Washington where the employment offer is made by Agency representatives whose bona fides have been established by a senior representative of the nominee's service. If the candidate accepts the proposal he is immediately scheduled for a polygraph examination. If the latter is favorable, the nominee continues his processing toward eventual civilian employment. In the meantime, with the candidate's cooperation, his wife is given a psychological assessment. Similar procedures have been followed, insofar as possible, on IDEALIST pilot candidates.

6. All of described processing is conducted with the understanding that any one of the Offices performing evaluations can, in terms of their normal field of interest, disapprove the individual's proposed participation in the program. The practice in the past has been to gradually assemble the complete file on the individual and, before asking the nominee to enter into a contract with the

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Agency, having the panel meet and as a unit acknowledge the individual's suitability.

7. The question of the precise nature of the "panel's" charter and exact responsibilities has recently been raised. It has been suggested that the members be formally identified and assigned responsibilities by some more official action than now contained in OPL-12. It is, therefore, recommended that an "Overflight Pilot Selection Panel" be formed and officially recognized for the selection of OXCART and IDEALIST pilots. The Panel will consist of single representatives from the following Offices: Medical Staff, Counter Intelligence Staff, Office of Security and the Office of Special Activities. The OSA representative will serve as Chairman of the Panel and will be responsible for providing to the other Panel members all available information regarding pilot candidates to permit intelligent judgments concerning an individual's over-all suitability for the assignment. The purpose of convening the Panel is to provide each Office represented an opportunity to consider a case in its entirety, i. e. over-all suitability to perform the mission from the standpoints of security, physical and mental health, and operations. The Chairman shall convene the Panel before a candidate enters into a contract. Prior to that point members will advise the Chairman immediately of any information obtained during their Office's processing which raises a question about a candidate's suitability. One or more negative votes by Panel members will constitute a Panel rejection of the candidate. The Chairman will report the findings and recommendations of the Panel to the Deputy Director for Science and Technology. In those cases wherein the DD/S&T does not agree with the Panel's rejection of a candidate, the DD/S&T may appeal the decision to the

*John P  
is  
Chairman  
1 Aug 66*

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Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, thereby seeking reversal of the Panel's position. The constitution and chartering of this Panel in no way abrogates the Panel members' parent Office prerogatives concerning professional judgments in a given case. Nor should it conflict in any manner with existing Agency regulations or established policies.

(Signed)

ALBERT D. WHEELON  
Deputy Director  
for  
Science and Technology

ATTACHMENT - 1  
As Stated

S E C R E T

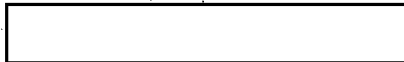
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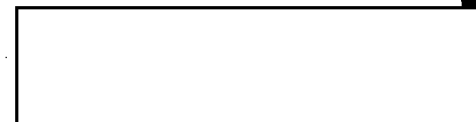
EO/OSA/ [redacted] (1 Sept. 64)

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